

THE CHURCH IN THE PRESENT CRISIS

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The Church in the Present Crisis by William Allen Harper

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WILLIAM ALLEN HARPER

**THE CHURCH IN
THE PRESENT CRISIS**

With the
author's Compliments
to
Mr. W. P. Bezell,

By William Allen Harper

President Elon College, North Carolina

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The Church in the Present Crisis

By

WILLIAM ALLEN HARPER, LL. D.

President of Elon College

*Author of "Preparing the Teacher," "The Making of
Men," "The New Layman for the New Time,"
"The New Church for the New Time,"
"Reconstructing the Church," etc.*

Introduction by

REV. PETER AINSLIE, D.D., LL.D.



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M.S.W.

*To
those who love the Lord
and are
committed to His program
for their
brothermen and for the
world and its institutions*

Introduction

THE author of this book is my friend. He belongs to that group of strong and brotherly characters that helps to bind Christians of all denominations together. Such a man is needed in these times of a divided Church. As a Christian educator he has revealed an influence and leadership that have indicated high merit in the circle of the nation's educators. He has honoured me in asking me to stand in the gateway of this volume, opening its pages to multitudes for their perusal. He needs no one to introduce him, however, for his former volumes have taken a permanent place in the thought of our time and this one is the best of all in its thorough and reverential discussion of many subjects having to do with our national life and spiritual possibilities.

There is hardly a chapter or even a subject but that it might be the theme of an entire volume. He has presented these so satisfactorily that no reader will fail to comprehend the importance of the brief discussion and will desire to go into more lengthy examination from these too brief pages, which after all is the best service a book can render.

Because President Harper and I are of different religious communions division in the Church is made more painful and manifestly more unnecessary. Our communions had their start about the same time, his a few years earlier than mine. Both communions owe a debt of gratitude to the devotion and courage of Barton W. Stone, Presbyterian minister of Kentucky, yet I wonder if Stone would have wanted us to live apart as we have done through nearly a hundred years—one party calling themselves “Christians” and the other “Disciples of Christ” and both denying the meaning of those sacred names by their separation from each other as well as their separation from other Christians and other Disciples of Christ. I have likewise often asked myself, if Thomas and Alexander Campbell had been able to see that the results of their labours would have culminated in the establishment of two distinct religious bodies—“Disciples of Christ” and “Churches of Christ”—would they not have revolted before a vision of such results? Because the “Disciples of Christ” number more than a million and the “Churches of Christ” three or four hundred thousand, does not mitigate the conditions. It is the fact that in the list of religious bodies there are now three additional bodies—President Harper’s, known as “Christians,” mine, known as “Disciples of Christ,” and “Churches of Christ,” that went off from the Disciples because there